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ABSTRACT

The power relationship between the student teacher, cooperating teacher, and the university supervisor is analyzed. This triadic relationship is commonly hierarchical with a superior cooperating teacher, an inferior student teacher, and a university supervisor playing only a tangential role that is frequently reduced to corroborating the opinions of the cooperating teacher. Four case studies are presented and discussed as they typify this traditional relationship. Revisions are suggested in the role of the supervisor and cooperating teacher as critics of the student teacher. (JD)

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POWER RELATIONSHIPS IN THE STUDENT TEACHING TRIAD

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Introduction

Successful completion of a supervised practice teaching experience is a common requirement of American teacher education programs and is considered to be extremely important. "The one indisputably essential element in professional education is practice teaching" (Conant, 1963, p. 142).

Practice (or student) teaching has been defined by the Association for Student Teaching is "the period of guided or supervised teaching when the student assumes increasing responsibility for the work with a given group of learners over a period of lessons or learning experiences" (Holstine & Steeves, 1954, p. 4). Supervision is normally provided by both a supervisor from the teacher training institution and the cooperating teaching in whose class the student teacher is placed. The term "student teaching triad" refers to the student teacher, the cooperating teacher, and university supervisor as a special group of three.

The predominate view of the appropriate function of practice teaching for the past few decades has approximated the laboratory approach as outlined by John Dewey in 1904 (Borrowman, 1965). For example, the Association of Teacher Educators (1973) in their Guidelines to Clinical Experiences in Teacher Education suggests:

> The clinical study of teaching is a continuous exploration and examination of educational possibilities in particular settings and under varying conditions. It is not a static exercise in demonstration of established ways (emphasis added, p. 1).

An alternative to the laboratory view of student teaching is the apprenticeship approach. The goal of the apprenticeship approach, according to Dewey, is to equip future teachers with the necessary tools of their profession. Emphasis is placed on the production of skilled technicians rather than on the development of thoughtful, self-critical teachers. Few teacher education programs publicly subscribe to the apprenticeship approach.

The large midwestern university at which this study took place rejects the apprenticeship approach and espouses a belief in the laboratory view. Statements by program directors such as, "Seminar is the time in which theory and practice are brought together," and "The goal of the teacher education program is autonomous teachers," emphasize the commitment to the development of thoughtful teachers (Barrows, 1978. p. 306).

The purpose of this paper is to examine power relationships in four student teaching triads at a large midwestern university. It will be seen that, despite program statements to the contrary, all three members of the triad are not equally powerful. Rather, the triadic relationship is hierarchical with a superior cooperating teacher and an inferior student teacher. Surprisingly, the university supervisor will be seen as not occupying a place in the hierarchy at all. Rather, the supervisor will be found to play a tangential role and function only to corroborate the opinions of the cooperating teacher. Further, it will be shown that the effect of this hierarchical relationship in the triad is the negation of the concept of the laboratory

approach. Although the university publicly subscribes to the development of self-critical teachers, the nature of the power relationships in the student teaching triad undermines program goals and transforms supervised student teaching into an apprenticeship program which produces classroom technicians.

Several reforms designed to overcome the undermining effects of power relationships in the student teaching triad will be suggested.

Literature

Three strands of literature are relevant in this analysis of power relationships in the student teaching triad. The first is related to the function of student teaching. The second is empirical research on power relationships within three-person groups. The third deals with relationships between the cooperating teacher, supervisor, and student teacher.

The Function of Student Teaching

As early as 1904, John Dewey recognized two different approaches to practice teaching which were based on quite distinct purposes. What Dewey called the laboratory point of view proposes to use student teaching as "an instrument in making real and vital theoretical instruction; the knowledge of subject-matter and of principals of education" (Dewey in Borrowman, 1965, p. 142). The immediate aim "is to supply the intellectual method and material of good workmanship" (Borrowman, 1965, p. 143). The ultimate goal is

to produce teachers who are thoroughly schooled in educational psychology, ethical philosophy, and subject matter and who will constantly be self-critical and thoughtful about their teaching in light of this accumulated knowledge.

Dewey called the alternative approach to the laboratory method the apprenticeship view of practice teaching. According to Dewey, the apprenticeship view is designed to give teachers a "working command of the necessary tools of their profession; control of the technique of classroom instruction and management; skill and proficiency in the work of teaching" (Borrowman, 1965, p. 142). The immediate and ultimate aims of the apprenticeship method are one and the same, "To form and equip the actual teacher" (Borrowman, 1965, p. 142).

As mentioned earlier, at the present time, the predominate view of the appropriate function of student teaching is more nearly aligned to Dewey's laboratory approach. Consider the similarity between the Association of Teacher Educator's definition of teacher competency and Dewey's ultimate goal of the laboratory approach.

Association of Teacher Educators:	Dewey's ultimate goal of the laboratory approach:
The imperative in teacher education is to educate teachers of high professional competence. Competence operationally defined is performance, a performance which can be observed, analyzed, commented on and, in some manner, measured. It rests on a foundation of:	To produce teachers
*intellectual curiosity	*who are thoroughly schooled in educational psychology, ethical philosophy, and subject matter.
	*and who will constantly be self-critical and thoughtful about their teaching in light of accumulated knowledge (Borrowman, 1965, p. 143).

*reasoned judgment and action based on creative and reflective thinking.
*attitudes of human acceptance and aesthetic sensitivity.
*understanding of the fundamental concepts, principles, and ways of thought of the profession (ATE, p. 3).

A widespread value among teacher education programs is the development of analytical, self-critical, thoughtful, and intellectually curious teachers. The production of flawless technicians capable of controlling groups of students and mechanically managing curricular programs is the goal of few teacher-training institutions.

Research on Three-Person Groups

Although German sociologist, George Simmel (1950) considered dyads to be symmetrical and based on reciprocal arrangements, he conceived of triads as being inherently unstable. Triads, as three-person groups, were seen to be asymmetrical and hierarchical (pp. 135-136). Simmel hypothesized that a triad tends to breakdown into a pair and an other. The other becomes mediator, holder of the balance of power, or a disturber of the solidarity of the pair.

Theodore Mills (1953) collected data on the interaction of 48 three-person groups in order to test Simmel's hypothesis that the most elementary differentiating tendency for a triad is for the threesome to segregate into a dyad and a other (p. 351). The results from his data confirmed Simmel's observation--the threesome tends to break up into a pair and a third party. He further indicated that the two more active members in the group comprised the pair while the third party was less active and remained relatively isolated from the group.

Both Simmel's hypothesis and Mills' empirical testing of the hypothesis suggest that triads comprised of three equally powerful individuals are not likely.

Relationships Between Student Teaching Triad Members

In articles related to student teaching, the existence of power differences between triad members has been documented. In some studies, the importance of the cooperating teacher is stressed while in others, the strength of the university supervisor is highlighted. Never is the student teacher perceived as most powerful. Occasionally, the student teacher is portrayed as a helpless individual trapped between two powerful forces--those represented by the university and those represented by the public school. And, in one study, the researcher suggests that triad relationships characteristically breakdown into dyadic coalitions, the most common of which is the cooperating teacher and supervisor in alliance against the student teachers.

According to Pritchard (1974), "there is no question that the cooperating teacher exerts tremendous influence over the attitudes and behavior of the student" (p. 18). The large number of studies that document student teacher conformity to cooperating teacher behavior and expectations emphasize this importance (e.g., Iannaconne, 1963; Tabachnick, 1977; Pritchard, 1974). Whether the influence of the cooperating teacher is positive or negative is almost beside the point. The important factor is that the cooperating teacher's influence--good or bad--may be quite substantial.

Contrary to the previously cited studies that emphasize the power of the cooperating teacher, Clark and Marker (1975) characterize the cooperating teacher as a relatively powerless individual.

> The [cooperating] teacher rarely has anything to say about who will be assigned; has formal responsibility not for supervising the student teacher but for operating an acceptable educational program for pupils in the class; may have no training or experience in supervision; is recompensed a pittance for the service (a typical fee is $50); is not finally responsible for evaluation of the student teacher; and, in many instances, will not even be acquainted with the college supervisor until the supervisor arrives on the scene (Clark & Marker in Ryan, 1975, p. 63).

Presumably, the university supervisor who "arrives on the scene" has the power to make assignments, supervise formally, and finally evaluate.

According to Goodlad, student teachers find themselves trapped between varying expectations of two powerful institutions--the university and the public school.

> A beginning teacher must run the gamut of expectations as he moves from professor to professor, to cooperating teacher, and finally to supervisor and principal in the schools. There rarely is a common set of agreements regarding what is expected of him and how these expectancies are to be evaluated. Each new instructor or supervisor is a challenge to the young teacher's adaptability and, unfortunately, an encouragement to whatever chameleon-like propensities he may possess (Goodlad, 1965, p. 267).

Yee's research on 124 student teaching triads supports Simmel's hypothesis that three-person groups break down into a pair plus one. Yee found that student teaching triads seemed to degenerate and become less viable over time. In fact, Yee (1968) contends. . .

> what apparently happens over time, as the triad members work longer and become more familiar with each other, is that coalitions are formed, especially between the leaders; and C-S [College Supervisor-Student Teacher] and T-S [Cooperating Teacher-Student Teacher] dyads exhibit strong tendencies toward negative outcomes (Yee, 1968, p. 104).

While the literature on student teaching has addressed the relationships between student teachers, cooperating teachers, and supervisors, few definite statements can be made. The only statement on which all parties seem to agree is that the student teacher has little influence. As Fuller and Brown conclude, "The relationship of the student teacher, cooperating teacher, and college supervisor is complex. The student teacher has relatively little influence on this relationship (in Ryan, 1975, p. 30).

There appears to be conflicting views regarding the power relationships between the student teacher, cooperating teacher, and supervisor. Pritchard contends the cooperating teacher is the most influential member of the triad while Clark and Marker perceive the cooperating teacher as rather powerless. Goodlad suggests that the university and public school both exert substantial influence on the student teacher who is trapped in between. Yee's research suggests that student teacher relationships with both the cooperating teacher and the supervisor tend to be negative and that a coalition seems to form between cooperating teachers and supervisors.

Methodology

These observations on power relationships in the student teaching triad and the implications for supervised practice teaching were an unintended outcome of another research project on why men are often identified as having difficulty during practice teaching.

Empirical data collected over a two-year period at a large midwestern university suggested that male student teachers were found to be 8.3 times as likely to be judged as having student teaching problems as female student teachers (Barrows, 1978, p. 7). A field study was designed to address the question of unequal success between men and women in student teaching. Anticipated outcomes of the study were: 1) a detailed description of the student teacher experiences of the men; and 2) an interpretation of the meaning of success.

Four male student teachers were the subjects of this indepth field study. The number four represented approximately one-third of the men enrolled in practice teaching. A variety of field study techniques were used in the study. The primary technique was direct observation but indirect observation, document analysis, respondent interviewing and direct participation were used as well.

The presence of the researcher at meetings between the cooperating teachers, supervisors, and student teachers made possible observations about power relationships in the triad and provided the data for this serendipitous finding.

The Data

The data section will be divided into two parts. The first is a description of the teacher education program at the university where the study was conducted. This description will include the program format, the idealized goals of the program, and the idealized conception of triad relations as stated by program officials and in program documents. The second section of the data will be four brief vignettes describing the experiences of each of the four men in the study. Power relationships in the four triads will be examined with special reference to evaluation of student teaching performance.

The Teacher Education Program

The teacher education program that was the focus of this study is a four semester sequence normally entered at the junior level. Prior to entrance into teacher education, students take mainly a two year liberal arts course. Approximately one-third of the four year bachelor's degree program consists of professional education courses. During the four semester teacher education program, students enroll in courses in social and psychological foundations of education and in methods of teaching. At the same time, they observe in classrooms, participate in two part-time student teaching placements and undertake one full-time 16-week student teaching experience.

Tabachnick, Popkewitz, and Zeichner (1978) conclude from their study of student teaching at this midwestern university that certain formal themes are expressed by program pronouncements.

> One theme is concerned with students being reflective and analytical in the conduct of their work. . .second, students should have autonomy in becoming a teacher. . . third is the theme of self-fulfillment. . . . A fourth theme is 'Now you are in the real world' (Tabachnick, Popkewitz, Zeichner, 1978, pp. 20-21).

The stated emphasis on reflective and analytic teaching, autonomy, and self-fulfillment underscore the value that teacher educators at this institution place on the laboratory approach.

The student teaching triad is an institutionalized arrangement through which the goal of reflective, autonomous, and fulfilled teachers is to be realized. As originally conceived by program developers, the triad is to be made of three equally powerful people--the student teacher, the cooperating teacher, and the supervisor. "The triad is an equal partnership between all three parties. It is a good means of communication. No one is more powerful" (Statement by a program director, Observation, January 19, 1977, cited in Barrows, p. 223). As equal partners, the triad members are to negotiate the roles each will play during the student teaching experience as they conference about lessons taught by the student and evaluate the performance of the student teacher. By participating in this equal partnership, the goal of reflective, autonomous teachers is to be realized.

Vignettes

A brief description of the experiences of each of the four subjects will now be presented to illustrate power relationships in the triads.

Kevin Smith. At the beginning of the semester, there were several indications that Kevin Smith would encounter difficulty during student teaching. First, a previous supervisor predicted that Kevin would have difficulty because Kevin seemed to lack forcefulness, to have problems expressing himself clearly, and to have trouble planning lessons. Second, Kevin had self-doubts. He felt that his lack of experience with children limited his effectiveness. But, Kevin also firmly believed that a full-time student teaching experience would correct these difficulties. Third, Kevin possessed several traits which program officials identified as common to weak student teachers. He was a low-key and non-assertive person, somewhat older than the typical student teacher and had entered elementary education after other career exploration.

Kevin was placed in a classroom with a young, vibrant, lively, and enthusiastic cooperating teacher. Her interactions with the children were a marked contrast to Kevin's exchanges. She spoke to the animatedly, firmly admonished inappropriate behavior, and frequently touched the children affectionately. Kevin spoke to the children in his characteristically low-key fashion. He quietly encouraged their cooperation and rarely had physical contact with the students. After four weeks of student teaching, Kevin's cooperating teacher was very disturbed by his performance. She claimed

that he had a poor attitude and lacked initiative. These were curious charges in light of Kevin's participation in student teaching up to that point. In the first place, Kevin had begun student teaching four weeks early by his own choice. He wanted to have as lengthy an experience as possible. Also, Kevin had volunteered to plan and oversee the indoor noon recreation program for over 250 students in the school. None of the full-time teaching staff had been willing to take the job. And, on certain occasions, Kevin had suggested resources at team planning meetings and occasionally typed up and distributed to the team members lists of materials related to particular topics. These are behaviors not normally associated with individuals lacking initiative.

Still, Kevin was seen by his cooperating teacher lacking in initiative and, university personnel and even Kevin eventually came to accept her judgment. When the researcher first became aware of the cooperating teacher's complaints, she asked the supervisor to assess Kevin's performance to date. The supervisor replied, "The lesson I saw today wasn't the worst I've ever seen or the best. But it is an isolated lesson. The cooperating teacher sees the whole thing and feels upset" (Interview, February 9, 1977).

In a meeting of university staff with Kevin, held after the decision was made for him to seek a new placement, the university staff member asked Kevin to present his own view of the problems in his first placement. While the staff member admitted that he had heard the supervisor's perspective already, he said he wanted Kevin's

view. It appeared that the staff member's request was really a formality, however. It seemed that the staff member had already accepted the supervisor's analysis of the situation after the supervisor had taken for granted the cooperating teacher's evaluation. The questions which the staff member posed indicated that he had already accepted "lack of initiative" as Kevin's problem. Repeated questions were asked about what responsibilities Kevin had assumed and what opportunities he had created for himself. Though Kevin cited several examples of duties he had voluntarily assumed, these were obviously not enough. When the staff member challenged Kevin's handling of the small group in a style similar to the cooperating teacher's, Kevin admitted that he "didn't take the opportunity" to teach otherwise. The staff member responded "What was the reason you didn't take the opportunity; were you afraid?" Kevin said "lack of initiative; I didn't get my feet wet" (Observation, February 16, 1977). The meeting appeared to reach a climax as Kevin adopted the perception and even used the language of the cooperating teacher to describe his behavior.

Having discussed the problems of his first placement, Kevin was sent out to observe several new classrooms. He was reminded to discuss with perspective teachers whether or not they would be willing to tell him if he was doing enough in the classroom or if they had any concerns. But the staff person reminded him, "you don't need to say, 'I had this problem with initiative'" (Observation, February 16, 1977).

After observing in several classrooms, Kevin chose another upper elementary classroom in a suburban school. His new cooperating teacher was a soft spoken, middle-aged woman. Her classroom was organized in the traditional style. Kevin seemed to feel comfortable in the classroom and began teaching classes in the same style as his cooperating teacher.

What appeared drastically different in the two placements was Kevin's relationship with his cooperating teacher. Kevin felt his second cooperating teacher was helpful and supportative. "She's been very supportative and I think she understands the situation I am in as far as just starting teaching" (Interview 2, Kevin Smith, April 20, 1977). His second cooperating teacher gave him verbal feedback on his lessons. In Kevin's first placement, there were certain subjects "they had to cover" and certain rules that could not be altered. Kevin felt more freedom in his second placement.

Based on observations made in both placements, it seemed to the researcher that Kevin's level of technical competence remained constant throughout the semester. In both placements, lessons appeared to be mostly routine and mechanistic. Strict recall questions were the dominate form of questioning at both sites. Inadequate preparation, which sometimes contributed to unfamiliarity with the subject matter and confusion on Kevin's part, was noted in both his first and second placements. Yet, matters of technical competence did not seem to be the focus of evaluative statements made about Kevin in either location. That is, the substance of what he did in the

classroom was not the basis for his judged success or failure; rather the manner in which he behaved in the classroom seemed more closely related to judged performance. Where as his low-key, quiet classroom manner was judged unacceptable by his first cooperating teacher, it was pleasing to his second cooperating teacher. In both his first and second placements, the supervisor accepted the evaluation of the cooperating teacher. When his performance was judged unacceptable by the first cooperating teacher, the supervisor concurred. When his manner was found pleasing by the second cooperating teacher, the supervisor again concurred.

Ron Brown. Ron Brown was predicted to be a very successful student teacher. Previous recommendations from supervisors praised his good ideas, adequate preparation, and pleasing manner with children. But, Ron did not complete student teaching, and though he graduated from the university with a degree in education, he was not recommended for certification.

The major impediment to Ron's completion of student teaching appeared to be his attitude and the amount of effort he was willing to expend. He did not seem genuinely interested in teaching. He told both his cooperating teacher and the researcher that he had no intention of seeking a job. Rather, he wanted to "do some traveling or just completely change his lifestyle for awhile" (Interview 1, Ron Brown, February 21, 1977). Because he had no interest in obtaining a teaching job, Ron expended little effort in student teaching. He appeared willing to do as little as was needed to "get by." He did not attend either the orientation or first seminar or meetings, for

example. When it became clear to Ron that the amount of effort required to complete the program was considerable, Ron chose to withdraw.

After several weeks in his placement, Ron's cooperating teacher was discouraged with Ron. He felt that Ron was just trying to "slide through." He reported to the researcher that Ron was late to school often and came unprepared. The cooperating teacher said the supervisor was not aware of the problem and the researcher recommended that he contact the supervisor.

After the supervisor was made aware of the cooperating teacher's dissatisfaction, a meeting was held between Ron, the cooperating teacher, the supervisor, and another university staff member. At the meeting, Ron was told that he would have to work much harder, that he would be supervised every week, and that certification was not necessarily promised. Apparently, Ron chose not to work harder or to agree to additional supervision. A check of his student records revealed that Ron did not need any credits to graduate, so satisfactory completion of student teaching was not necessary for graduation. Although Ron chose to withdraw from the program, his cooperating teacher maintained that Ron possessed the skills to be a good teacher. Ron, the cooperating teacher said, "just lacked a willingness to work hard."

Ron Brown's case is an example of the power of the cooperating teacher in evaluating student teaching performance. Well over half the semester had passed before the university supervisor was aware that Ron was not performing satisfactorily and, the supervisor's awareness of Ron's unacceptable behavior came not through her own observations, but through the report of the cooperating teacher. Once Ron was identified

by the cooperating teacher as "having difficulty," the university became involved and set minimal requirements for Ron if he wanted to satisfactorily complete the semester. Ron was unwilling to fulfill these requirements and withdrew from the program. Nevertheless, if the cooperating teacher had not identified Ron's difficulties, his unacceptable performance may have gone unnoticed by the supervisor. And, the supervisor with little data of her own, readily accepted and acted upon the evaluation of the cooperating teacher.

Steve Jones. Steven Jones was a lively, enthusiastic, open, and sincere person. For him, student teaching was not a relaxing experience. His state of mind vacillated between feeling depressed and slightly positive about school. Even though the last part of the semester had a gradual positive trend, he was emotionally exhausted by the end of the semester. He decided not to re-enter the emotional fray of teaching in the fall and chose rather to accept a job in business.

With respect to evaluation, Steve's student teaching experience had an unusual twist. Steve's cooperating teacher and supervisor felt he had been very successful in student teaching. Their verbal remarks and written evaluations indicated their confidence in his performance. Steve, on the other hand, felt that he had not been able to obtain the respect of some of his students. Therefore, he thought, his relationships with some of the children were "awful" and he had been a failure.

The discrepancy between Steve's perceptions of his performance and those of his cooperating teacher and supervisor stemed from differing views of good teaching. Steve felt very constrained by the open planned school with its "individualized" curriculum and its need for quiet

activities. He felt compelled to teach "dull" lessons and yell at children when he did not want to. His supervisor and cooperating teacher felt he performed satisfactorily. According to them, he implemented the lesson prescribed by the school and maintained order in the given style. They seemed to overlook the fact that some lessons lack the substance of technically competent instruction. And, they seemed unaware that Steve was "grinding inside."

Exchanges at Steve's final evaluation conference emphasized the unimportance of his personal assessment of his student teaching experience. He shared with his cooperating teacher and supervisor doubts about his own adequacy as a teacher. He further stated that he had no intention of seeking a teaching job in the fall. His cooperating teacher's response was "you will, you will, you'll think back, it will be positive" (Final Evaluation Conference, May 17, 1977).

Both Steve's supervisor and cooperating teacher wrote glowing recommendations for him. They praised Steve for his cooperation, hard work, and personal growth. Neither the cooperating teacher nor the supervisor ever acknowledged any awareness of the soul searching struggle that Steve was fiercely engaged in throughout the student teaching experience.

Tim White. Tim White's student teaching experience differed in certain respects from the other three men's experiences in this study. His experience lacked the emotional turmoil of Steve Jones' practicum. It was also void of the serious questioning of adequacy which characterized both Ron Brown's and Kevin Smith's experiences. For Tim, student teaching was a very positive and rewarding time. It confirmed for him that the

decision to enter teaching was a correct one. Both his cooperating teacher and supervisor felt he was very successful and Tim gained confidence as a teacher.

Tim's relationship with his cooperating teacher varied considerably with the relationships established by the other three men and their cooperating teachers. Tim and his cooperating teacher seemed to be very compatible both in and out of the classroom. Tim was comfortable teaching in his cooperating teacher's style. Occasionally the two would see each other socially, and they became good friends during the semester. But Tim recognized that his cooperating teacher, four years his senior, was also his teaching superior. He did not resent the critical role that his cooperating teacher assumed. In fact, he felt the negative comments helped him improve as a teacher. As Tim reported,

> I know sometimes I find myself getting really cocky, thinking I know more than I really do. Then there are days that I blow it in the classroom. Blow a lesson or my cooperating teacher comes up to me and says, 'you've got to start acting again, I know what you're thinking about but you can wait until the weekend to relax, you've got one more day that you've got to entertain these kids' and when you do, that's when you need that kind of criticism (Interview 2, Tim White, March 25, 1977).

Tim's successful student teaching experience seemed attributable in part to the relationship he had with his cooperating teacher. While Tim demonstrated assertiveness, at the same time he acknowledged that the other two members of his triad were his superiors. While Tim occasionally challenged or tested his cooperating teacher and supervisor, he never really posed a threat to them. He seemed keenly aware of how to get

along in student teaching and was willing to get along if it enhanced his chances for future employment. Getting along was not a difficult problem for Tim because he genuinely liked and respected his cooperating teacher. His supervisor, who only observed Tim four or five times during the semester, accepted the cooperating teacher's evaluation that Tim was a very capable student teacher.

Conclusions

The conclusions from this study are:

1. Despite program statements to the contrary, the student teaching triad is not made of three equally powerful people.

2. Student teachers have very little power in the triadic relationship.

3. Cooperating teachers are very powerful in determining student teaching success.

4. University supervisors tend to exercise little authority in evaluating student teachers and readily accept the assessment of the cooperating teachers.

5. The result of the disproportionate power of the cooperating teacher is the transformation of the practice teaching experience from a laboratory to an apprenticeship approach.

Program pronouncements that "the triad is an equal relationship between all three parties" are naive statements. Not only does the concept of an equally powerful three-person group violate the sociological hypothesis of Simmel and the empirical findings of Mills, it defies common sense and the reality of student teaching. One of the major functions of the cooperating teacher and supervisor is to evaluate student teacher performance. The evaluative function of

these two immediately gives them power over the student teacher. From the first orientation meeting of the semester, the importance of receiving a good evaluation from the cooperating teacher and supervisor was stressed repeatedly to the student teachers.

> At a university seminar on future employment, a student teacher asked the placement official which references were 'most persuasive' in the placement file. The placement official responded, 'It depends on the geographical area. Sometimes references from clergy are important. Personal references are not. The most important references are from the senior student teaching experience--the cooperating teacher and the supervisor' (Observation, February 23, 1977).

While the teacher education program publicly values the student teacher's ability to be self-critical, clearly student self-evaluations have little value for future employment purposes. Placement officials and potential employers value the assessment of the experienced cooperating teachers and supervisors for more than self-evaluations. Furthermore, the university plays a certifying role, and it recommends student teachers for state licensing through the evaluations of supervisors. Despite program claims that all members of the triad are equal, student teachers can never be equally powerful because of the evaluative role of the other two members of the triad.

While the relative powerlessness of the student teacher is not a surprising finding, the way in which power was found to be distributed between cooperating teachers and supervisors was. While originally it appeared that the cooperating teachers and supervisors possessed approximately equal power, because of their respective

evaluative roles, in reality, the cooperating teachers were much more powerful. But, they were more powerful almost by default. University supervisors did not exercise their authority and in all cases simply acquiesed to the opinions of the cooperating teacher. In all four cases observed in this field study, the cooperating teacher's assessment.

Perhaps the most dramatic example of supervisor acquiesence occurred in Kevin Smith's case. Though Kevin's teaching performance appeared identical in two different placements, he was judged both successful and unsuccessful by the different cooperating teachers. The supervisor, who remained constant throughout the semester, agreed on each occasion with the cooperating teacher's assessment.

Less dramatic but equally important was the supervisor's response in Ron Brown's case. Although she was unaware of Ron's problems until the cooperating teacher suggested them, she immediately accepted the cooperating teacher's evaluation and took decisive action to correct the situation.

Though Steve Jone's and Tim White's experiences did not involve any question about their teaching ability, in both cases, the supervisors followed the lead of the cooperating teachers and corroborated their evaluations.

There are two possible explanations for supervisory acquiescence to cooperating teachers. Their concurrent role as graduate students may prevent supervisors from visiting the student teachers frequently and they, therefore, acquiesce to what they believe to be a more

knowledgeable position--the cooperating teachers'.[1] Alternately, supervisors, ever mindful of the difficulty in finding a sufficient number of school placements, may demur from challenging cooperating teachers' opinions for fear of loss of a future placement. Whatever the reason, cooperating teachers were clearly more influential than supervisors in evaluating student teaching performance

The outcome of this great power of the cooperating teachers to determine success in student teaching is that the stated goal of the teacher education program--to produce reflective, analytic, and self-fulfilled teachers--is undermined. Student teachers, fearful of receiving unfavorable recommendations, conform to the expectations of their cooperating teachers. Rather than to question, ponder, or experiment with a variety of teaching techniques, they teach in ways they believe are consistent with their cooperating teachers' wishes and try to avoid conflict with them. For example,

> There was the whole thing about having to show him (the cooperating teacher) what I was doing all the time. And I was still teaching things that maybe I wouldn't have gone into such depth. . . . I'd always give in because it wasn't my class. You know, that's the breaks, I guess (Interview 4, Tim White, June 30, 1977).

> I tried to do anything to avoid her (the cooperating teacher) getting mad at me. . .maybe I was just avoiding conflict, but I also felt like I was in a situation where I didn't want to raise all kinds of trouble and things like that (Interview, Steve Jones, May 24, 1977).

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[1] In fact, only one of the four student teachers (Kevin Smith) was observed by their supervisor the required six-eight times (Barrows, 1978).

> After his 'unsuccessful' first placement, Kevin made a personal resolution to appear more assertive. He felt this attitude change was necessary in order to 'get through' the university program. 'I am taking a much less friendlier stance with children and teachers. This is necessary, I believe, to convey to all concerned I mean business' (Personal Journal, Kevin Smith, February 14, 1977).

The need to obtain a positive evaluation from their cooperating teachers leads student teachers to imitate, and not experiment, to conform and not challenge, and to accept and not question.

In short, the power of the cooperating teacher to single-handedly determine success in student teaching converts the practice teaching into exactly what the Association of Teacher Educators says it should not be--"a static exercise in demonstration of established ways." Although the public statements of the teacher education program claim a belief in Dewey's laboratory approach to practice teaching, in reality, the program fosters the apprenticeship approach. The program may produce teachers skilled in the techniques of classroom instruction and management and proficient in the work of teaching, according to the model of their cooperating teacher but they remain largely uncritical and unreflective.

Suggested Reforms in Teacher-Education

If thoughtful and independent teachers are the goal of a teacher training program, the role of the supervisor and cooperating teacher as critics need revision. Student teachers must be given more latitude to function on their own and without the constant supervision and advice of "the experts." John Dewey's explanation of the

proper role of the supervisor is just as appropriate today as when it was first suggested 75 years ago.

> The work of the expert or supervisor should be directed to getting the student to judge his own work critically, to find out for himself in what respects he has succeeded and what failed, and to find the probable reasons for both failure and success, rather than to criticizing him definitely and specifically upon special features of his work. It ought to go without saying (unfortunately, it does not in all cases) that criticism should be directed to making the professional student thoughtful about his work in light of principles, rather than to induce in him a recognition that certain special methods are good, and certain other special methods bad (Dewey in Borrowman, p. 168).

Cooperating teachers and supervisors need to be specially trained so that they can help student teachers develop skills in self-evaluation and critical teaching. The redefinition of the role of supervisor and cooperating teaching from critic to resource is a dramatic departure from many current teacher education programs. Yet, if independent teachers are the goal of teacher education, such a change must take place.

Concurrent with the redefinition of the role of supervisor and cooperating teacher, a reconceptualization of the evaluation process is also needed. Evaluation of student teachers should be limited to identifying and "weeding out" those who lack some clearly defined standards of minimal competence. Those in charge of evaluation must recognize that teacher growth is a continuous progress and will continue to occur after student teachers have entered the profession. Student teachers should not be expected to have uniform competence in all teaching techniques by the time they complete the teacher education

program. Still student teachers should demonstrate some minimal competence, clearly not equal to that of experienced teachers but, nevertheless, acceptable for classroom practice. More importantly, student teachers should demonstrate beginning habits and skills of self-appraisal, reference to guiding principles in justifying teaching decisions, and the ability to apply insight into the dynamics of classroom interaction to the student teaching experience.

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